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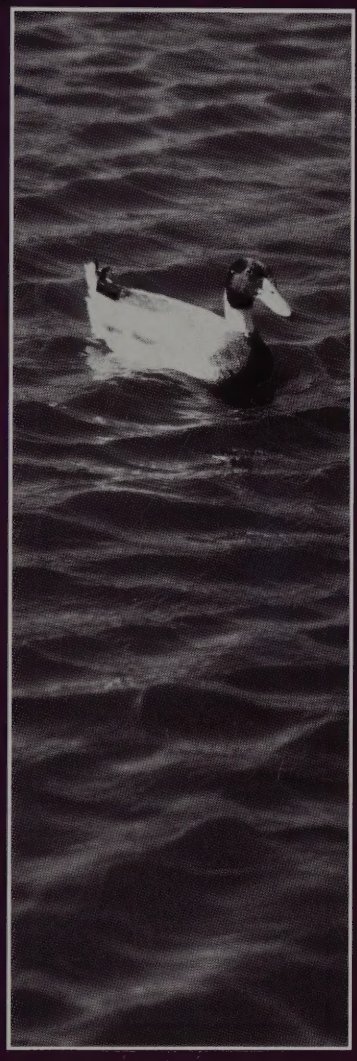
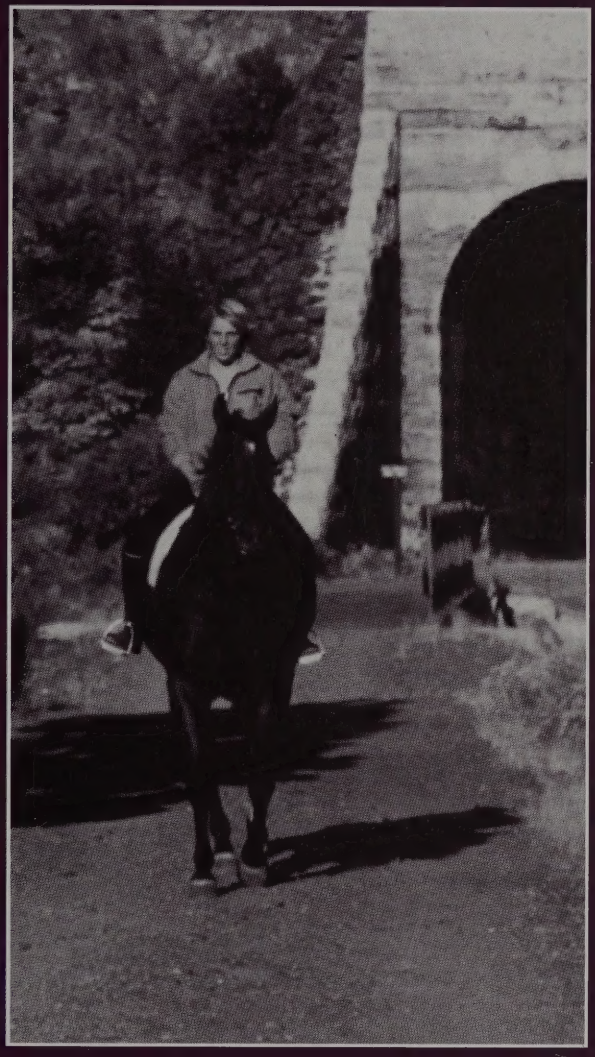
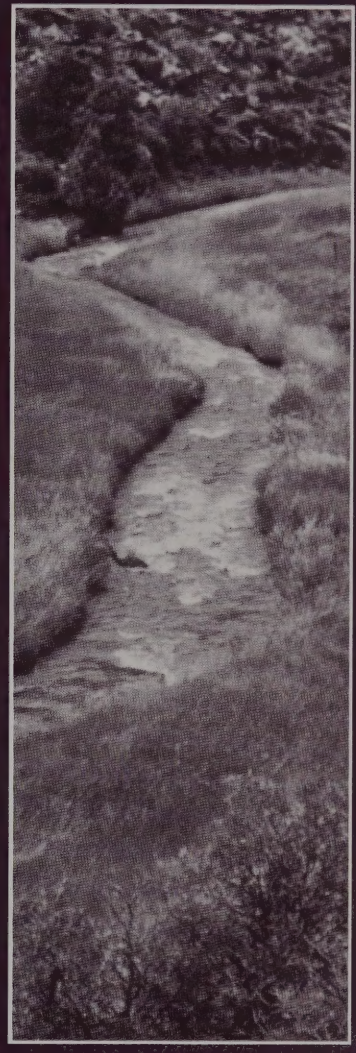
Meeting the Challenge in 1991







Recreation 2000, Fish & Wildlife 2000, Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's

Executive Summary On Implementation of Three Initiatives

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To the Reader

This is a summary of reports on three Bureau of Land Management (BLM) initiatives that support the Interior Department's stewardship and outdoor recreation agendas. These reports, *Recreation 2000, Fish and Wildlife 2000,* and the *Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's,* comply with the Fiscal Year 1991 directive of the House Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations, which requested the BLM to assess the progress and problems in implementing these three initiatives.

This report exemplifies the BLM's recent shift toward a more balanced approach to public lands management. This approach seeks to make the resources available to all Americans by increasing recreational opportunities on the public lands, focusing on efforts to restore and protect vital wildlife and riparian areas, and ensuring the public lands continue to provide needed natural resources in an environmentally sound manner. I call this the "New BLM," and I am personally committed to its goals, all of which support the Interior Department's commitment to improved stewardship of the lands entrusted to us.

Recreation 2000, Fish and Wildlife 2000 and the *Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's* are already answering the call for increased recreational opportunities, protection, and wise use of the Nation's public lands and natural resources entrusted to the BLM. Volunteers are giving their time and talents in record numbers to see that these initiatives succeed, and partnerships have been formed with a number of organizations across the country who are committed to a national stewardship ethic.

There is still much to be done, and complete success will take many years. But 1991 has shown that with the support of Congress and the American people, we can succeed in meeting the ambitious goals we have set.

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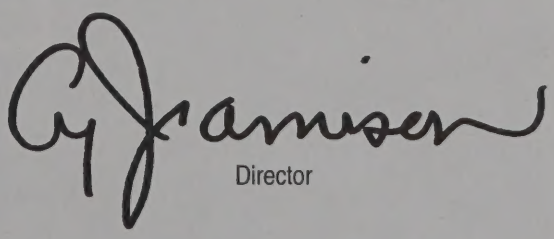


Director

Recreation 2000, Fish & Wildlife 2000, Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) oversees the Nation's largest system of public lands, covering more than 270 million acres. BLM-administered lands cover a broad spectrum of America's landscape, from rangelands to coastline, alpine meadow to sand dune, slick rock canyon to dry lake, raging river to subterranean cave.

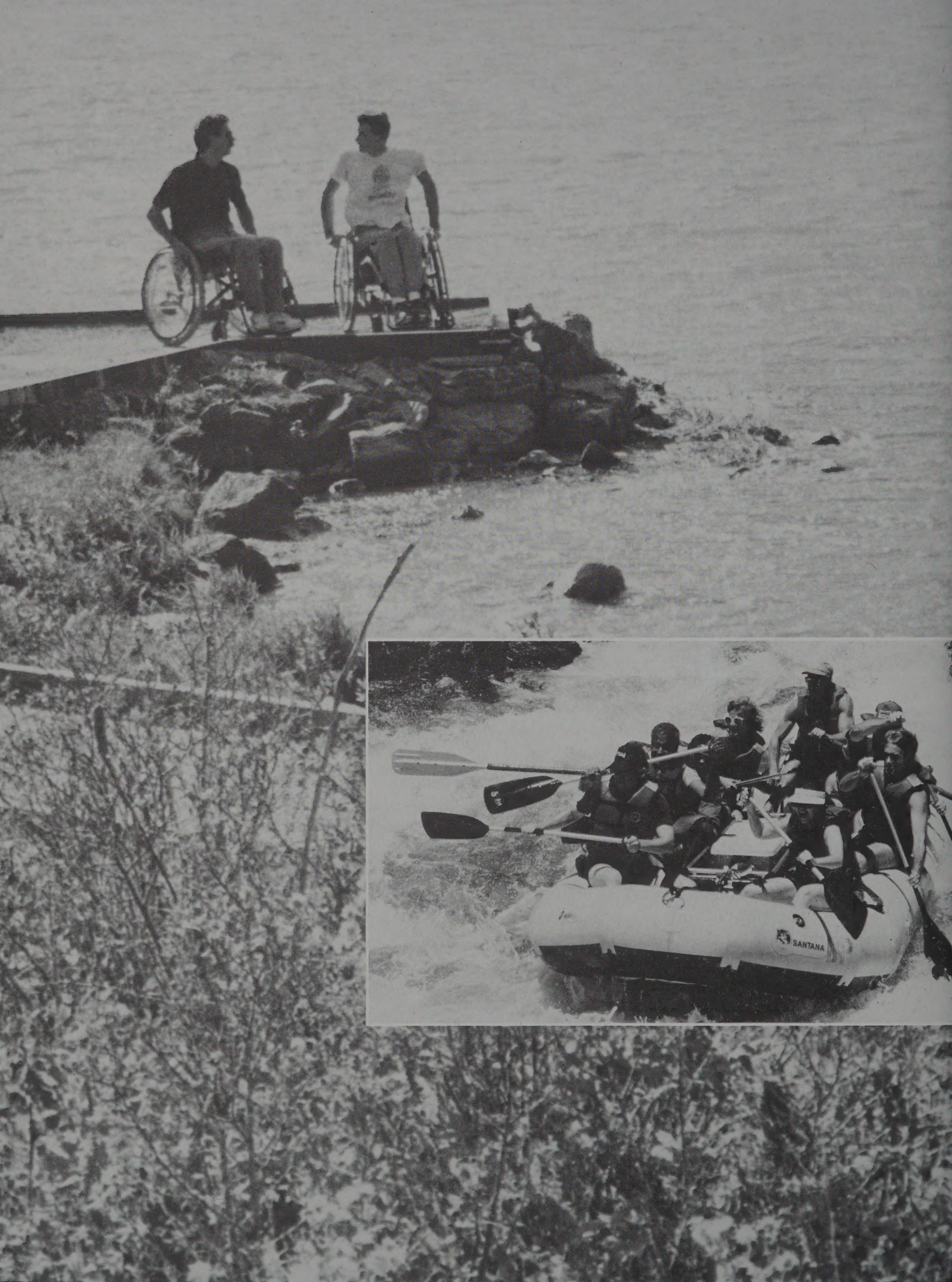
This Executive Summary highlights individual reports on 1991 accomplishments in three key BLM programs, *Recreation 2000, Fish and Wildlife 2000,* and the *Riparian-Wetlands Initiative for the 1990's.*

Adding to traditional uses of BLM lands, such as livestock grazing, mining, and timber production, these programs are vital components of the BLM's "multiple use" mission of managing, protecting, and improving public lands to serve the American people for all times.

The BLM's Recreation program seeks to provide increased recreational opportunities on the public lands for all Americans. The BLM's Fish and Wildlife program seeks to improve and manage habitat for the tremendous variety of species found on the public lands, while the Riparian-Wetlands program seeks to restore and maintain ecologically rich areas bordering creeks, rivers and lakes in the Western United States.

Shared Objectives

Although presented through three independent reports, these programs are integrated, as some components of one may support the goals of another. For example, *Fish and Wildlife 2000* contains a separate riparian objective, as most fish and wildlife species in the Western United States depend in some way on a healthy riparian ecology. In addition, many popular recreation activities, such as boating or camping, are focused on riparian-wetland areas. Some forms of recreation, such as birdwatching or fishing, involve fish and wildlife resources. These programs do not exist independently, but rather they are managed together in many cases to meet common goals.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Recreation 2000

The BLM provides more opportunities for recreation than any other single Federal or State agency. Examples include hiking, camping, biking, skiing, touring, whitewater rafting and even hang gliding. The purpose of the *Recreation 2000 Initiative* is to update and energize the BLM's Recreation Management Program and to accomplish more effectively its multiple-use objective. The principal goal of the BLM's recreation policy is to ensure the availability of public lands for a variety of outdoor activities.

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By following the blueprint of *Recreation 2000* and its implementation plan, the BLM is becoming substantially more responsive to visitors' needs and better known for its commitment to the protection and management of natural resources on public lands.

The BLM has made major strides in implementing *Recreation 2000* since its inception in 1989. The agency's goals are to improve information and interpretive services to visitors; protect essential recreation resources; publicize the BLM's recreation management and support programs; forge Federal, State, local and private partnerships to distribute information about recreation opportunities; and expand public outreach initiatives. Recreation programs were budgeted at $22 million in 1991, and $25 million in 1992.

Through Recreation 2000, the BLM has:

- Implemented a prototype computer information service which delivers information on the BLM's recreation programs to more than 2.4 million home computer users and 70,000 travel agents.
- Built handicapped accessible picnic and fishing sites such as one near Miles City, Montana. The site features more than 1,700 feet of concrete trails, a parking area with a wheelchair ramp and wheelchair-accessible picnic tables.
- Completed a land exchange in BLM's Prineville District Office in Oregon that brought a block of more than 52,000 acres of private land into public ownership. Other land acquisitions for recreation include 4,100 acres in Colorado; and 156 acres in Utah at the Cisco takeout on the Colorado River, assisting public use of Utah's best place for an overnight whitewater river trip, used by over 10,000 river runners per year.
- Made significant progress in providing visitor information and interpretation, protecting and monitoring resources, improving access, increasing the use of partnerships and volunteers, bolstering tourism programs, increasing construction where appropriate and improving maintenance of facilities.

Rafting photo
©Spencer Swanger/
Tom Stack & Associates

Fish and Wildlife 2000

More than 3,000 species of mammals, fish, birds, reptiles and amphibians live on the public lands managed by the BLM, including all North American native species of big game, quail and grouse. Eighty percent of the remaining habitat for desert bighorn sheep is on BLM-managed land.

The BLM's *Fish and Wildlife 2000* initiative seeks to improve the management of fish and wildlife habitat on all BLM-administered public lands.

With *Fish and Wildlife 2000,* the BLM is

- Promoting a diversity of wildlife on public lands by restoring, maintaining and enhancing habitat.
- Expanding opportunities for the public to watch wildlife on public lands.
- Improving the management of habitat for fish species that spend all or part of their lifecycles on public lands, including bass, and rainbow and cutthroat trout.
- Protecting threatened and endangered species of wildlife, fish and plants by improving habitats and by stepping up inventories. More than 162 species of animals and plants found on public lands are considered threatened or endangered.

Under *Fish and Wildlife 2000,* the budget for fish and wildlife habitat management has doubled — from $16.3 million in Fiscal Year 1987 to $34.1 million in Fiscal Year 1992. Of the total, the BLM allocated $7 million in 1991 for the protection of threatened and endangered species.

Through Fish and Wildlife 2000, the BLM has:

- Launched a 12-year program to increase the production of adult salmon and steelhead by 172,000 fish annually in Idaho, Oregon, California and Alaska.
- Sponsored 30 National Fishing Week events in 1991, attracting nearly 3,700 participants.
- Worked with Federal and State agencies, along with four national conservation groups, to establish 159 wildlife viewing sites on Federal and State lands.
- Established 115 new water sources for desert bighorn sheep and reintroduced bighorns into 39 new habitat areas.
- Reintroduced elk into the Peavine Mountain Area in Oregon's Medford District.
- Increased monitoring of the northern spotted owl.

Rainbow Trout photo
©Brian Parker/
Tom Stack & Associates

Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990s

The BLM's *Riparian-Wetland Initiative for the 1990's,* a product of the Interior Secretary's ambitious resource stewardship agenda, was developed to protect watersheds and to provide the widest diversity for plants and animals. The program complements other BLM initiatives, such as *Fish and Wildlife 2000* and *Recreation 2000.*

Riparian-wetland areas constitute 23.7 million acres, or 8.8 percent of the 270 million acres of public lands managed by the BLM. Riparian areas are lands adjacent to lakes, creeks, streams and rivers. Wetlands, which are areas saturated by ground water, include marshes, shallows, swamps, bogs and estuaries.

The values and benefits of these vital areas far exceed the small acreage they occupy. In the otherwise arid Western U. S., these areas provide scarce water and shelter for a variety of fish and wildlife species. The conditions of these areas can also have major impacts on water quality and quantity because they act as filters for the water flowing through them and can affect the entire watershed if degraded.

The BLM has set several goals in its effort to manage these important areas. Specifically, the agency is working to restore and maintain riparian-wetland areas so that 75 percent or more are in proper functioning condition by 1997, and to protect these areas by avoiding or mitigating surface-disturbance activities, such as road and pipeline construction, mineral development, recreation, timber harvesting and grazing. In addition, the BLM will acquire and expand riparian-wetland areas, mainly through land exchanges, and provide more information to the public about the importance of healthy riparian-wetland areas. Another goal is to expand partnerships with affected parties in the management of these environmentally sensitive areas.

Values of Riparian-Wetland Areas

Riparian-wetland areas

- Purify water, removing sediments as water moves through.
- Reduce the risk of flood damage.
- Reduce streambank erosion.
- Increase irrigation water by holding water in stream banks.
- Maintain instream and streambank ecology, increasing biodiversity.
- Increase ground water supplies.
- Support a diversity of animal and plant species.
- Maintain habitat for healthy fish populations.
- Provide water, forage, and shade for livestock.
- Provide areas to fish, camp, picnic, relax.

Recreation, Fish & Wildlife, and Riparian-Wetland Resources on BLM Lands

- 301 Special Recreation Areas
- 15 million acres in 6 National Conservation Areas and 1 National Recreation Area
- 6 million acres in 161 recreation related Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- 32 National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers stretching over 2,000 miles.
- 2 million acres in 162 established natural areas
- 171 thousand miles of fishable streams
- 6 thousand miles of hiking trails
- 22 National Recreation, Scenic, and Historic Trails reaching a total of 2,000 miles in length
- 44 Back Country Byways
- 65 thousand miles of all-terrain vehicle roads including thousands of miles of primitive roads
- 554 developed recreation sites, including 1,749 day use sites and 5,552 campsites
- 487 boating access points
- 30 visitor information centers
- 19 concession operations
- 2.4 million acres of lakes and reservoirs
- 1.6 million acres in 66 Wilderness Areas
- 129 thousand historic and archaeological sites
- 8.7 thousand miles of floatable rivers
- 159 wildlife viewing sites
- 233 million acres of small game habitat
- 206 million acres of big game habitat
- 24 million acres of riparian and wetland areas
- 182 thousand miles of riparian streams
- 35 thousand acres of National Riparian Conservation Areas

Note: Some numbers are rounded

Blue Grouse photo
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